

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Remembering “The Contract”: A Bibliography about Bahamian Labour Migration

Virginia C. F. Ballance¹
The College of The Bahamas

INTRODUCTION

For the 2011-2012 academic year the College of The Bahamas initiated an annual campus-wide research theme. For the first year the theme chosen was “Migration”. The theme was to be explored across all disciplines and interpreted in the widest sense possible. Throughout the year numerous migration-related events were held: five public lectures, three symposia, a photography exhibition, a book festival, a film festival, a book launch, and a bookmark/logo competition.

Migration has been a fundamental feature of Bahamian labour history in the 20th century. Most migration has been the result of economic motivation: the internal movement of people from the Out or Family Islands to Nassau in search of work and better living standards or the emigration of Bahamian labourers abroad. At the beginning of the 20th century Bahamians moved to Panama to build the Panama Canal, or to Florida in the 1920s to help build Miami (Mohl, 1987). One of the most significant movements of Bahamian labour occurred between 1943 and 1965 when over 30,000 Bahamians were hired on contracts to supplement the agricultural labour force needed in the East Coast states of the United States. The programme was known as “The Contract”. Migration trends during the latter half of the 20th century have been characterized by the movement of Haitian labourers to the Bahamas in search of work.

The movement of people may be studied through the lens of various disciplines: sociology, ethnography, economics, politics, or public policy. Generally, however, migrants move to areas of economic growth and opportunity; these are described as the “pull factors” that encourage migration. The “push factors” that typically force people to leave their homes and families and migrate are poverty, lack of opportunity, land shortages or poor living conditions.

This bibliography was compiled to bring together books, scholarly articles, governmental reports and biographical accounts relating to migration of Bahamians to the United States on The Contract between 1943 and 1965. It is intended to supplement the paper by Thompson that is published in this volume of the *International Journal of Bahamian Studies* and to provide the student of Bahamian history with the stepping stones needed to delve into further research on this fascinating topic.

¹ Virginia C. F. Ballance, Nursing and Health Sciences Librarian, Hilda Bowen Library, Libraries and Instructional Media Services, The College of The Bahamas, P.O. Box N-4912, Nassau, Bahamas.

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E-mail: vballance@cob.edu.bs

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